

Abort the Court?



Phoenix X Eeyore

In the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court decision regarding abortion, it seemed like as good a time as any to post some thoughts on the topic. Not because I have any authority on the matter but just because I have not seen anyone lay out their thoughts about it as I do here (and, ostensibly, someone else pondering the matter might find it useful. If not, you can ignore it. Unlike the Supreme Court, I don't tell people what they can or can't do).

The question of abortion seems incredibly complex. And yet, it also seems to me, few people (or at least few men) seem to appreciate its complexity. In fact, most people seem to have very self-evident stances on it in two opposing camps of "Pro-Choice" versus "Pro-Life" as if never the twain shall meet. I fail to see that simplicity.

Can one advocate *both* life *and* choice? Why *not*?

I feel divided on the issue much like the Supreme Court and their ruling today except *in precisely the reverse conclusion*: if I had found myself in their situation, I would have ruled 6-3 in the opposite direction, in favor of *Roe vs. Wade*. To explain and illustrate how I struggle internally on this question, I'll lay out my views as nine separate "judges". However, my views on "life" and "choice" will not necessarily correspond to my "vote" on *Roe vs. Wade*. Subsequently, I will title each section with the motivating theme ("Life" or "Choice") and conclude with a vote "FOR" (upholding *Roe vs. Wade*) or "AGAINST" (overturning *Roe vs. Wade*).

1. CHOICE. As a guy who has never had an abortion and never will face the question of a baby growing in my belly, rape, pregnancy-by-rape, giving birth, or running a single-parent family, it seems obvious to me that men should stay the hell out of making decisions for women about abortion. Let women argue and decide about this question among themselves. The fact that men anyway have disproportionate power in society and furthermore can impregnate without having to bear the psychological, social, physiological, and often economic costs of pregnancy and childbirth of something they personally contributed to simply affirms that initial stance. In practice, this would mean that only the women on the Supreme Court would vote on this issue and they clearly would have voted to uphold *Roe vs. Wade* by a vote of 2-1. Vote: FOR.

2. LIFE. As someone who loves and respects women, in (sometimes depressing) awe of what women have to go through and deal with in this world, even if I had the power to decide, I would say: give women all of the power, education, and resources they need to have safe, happy, and healthy sexual lives—including abortion. This also means trusting women to use those resources to make their own decisions. It means respecting the fact that patriarchy divides society in ways that remain invisible to men and honoring the labor (no pun intended) that it took for each mother to bring each of us into this world. Let each woman have the support she needs for her own personal decision without any moralizing from one side or the other. Keep women's lives sacred and uphold *Roe vs. Wade*. Vote: FOR.

3. CHOICE. As someone who recognizes the illegitimacy of the state, the illegitimacy of the Supreme Court, and the grave injustices and patriarchy that both have entailed for the United States and people subject to their rule, it seems

clear to me that the state should burden people in general, and women (especially working women) specifically, as little as possible. Overturning *Roe vs. Wade* would *de facto* bring more unnecessary burden into their lives. They need opportunities, options, and choices, not restrictions. Vote: FOR.

4. LIFE. As someone who stops and bends down to help insects struggling to get right-side up, feeling empathy for a notably more complex life form such as a fetus seems self-evident. Enabling easy access to abortions means, to some degree, a greater number of abortions and, implicitly, a violation of the integrity and/or sanctity of fetuses which, even if not independent, we recognize as something human or, at least, on the verge of human. Also, it seems reasonable to want to defend that innocent life's (or proto-life's) ability to develop and grow. While not necessarily going so far as to ban abortions altogether, overturning *Roe vs. Wade* would at least defer the decision-making to states and make abortion access more difficult, hopefully leading to couples practicing safer sex (fewer pregnancies) and (ultimately) fewer abortions which, of course, also can traumatize the mother as well as the fetus. Vote: AGAINST.

5. CHOICE. As someone who recognizes the illegitimacy of the state, the illegitimacy of the Supreme Court, and the tendency to place faith in the government in general—specifically the federal government—to solve problems that one could resolve at lower levels of governance, it seems clear to me that *Roe vs. Wade* sets a dangerous precedent in handing a mandate to the federal government which ought to defer to lower levels (such as individual states). Don't like it? Change the state government and state law. While all states lack legitimacy and function as sophisticated criminal gangs with elaborate bureaucracies, conceptions of gradated democracy (such as libertarian municipalism) imply that, unless otherwise impossible or inadvisable, all decision-making power should remain closer to local regions to determine. This means that each state (or even each city or each neighborhood) should have the right to decide for themselves how to relate to such issues. Vote: AGAINST.

6. LIFE. As someone who feels the pain of children struggling to find attention, struggling to find love, and struggling to find their place in life, the matter seems clear. The dynamic of fewer humans and fewer unwanted children naturally would lead to more time, energy, and resources available to devote to all of the existing and coming children who desperately need the support of parents and other adults. From this perspective, the court may consider sending a clear message that encourages women to seriously consider abortion as an option. Upholding *Roe vs. Wade* seems the very least we can do. Vote: FOR.

7. CHOICE. As someone who feels that the state does far more damage than good to human and nonhuman animals as well as the environment, band-aids like *Roe vs. Wade* provide a deceptive veil of complacency that the government protects us. The Supreme Court should not pretend to defend human rights and it should strip everyone of the illusion that the reigning plutocracy works on behalf of working people in general and specifically women and people of color. Hopefully, overturning *Roe vs. Wade* can help incite people to rise up and overthrow this entire system that has deceived us into believing it not only will help us but that it represents us. Vote: AGAINST.

8. LIFE. As someone who cares deeply about animals, the very idea of bringing in more humans to this world who (in all likelihood) will eat meat or consume resources that directly or indirectly lead to animal suffering, seems horrifying. Not just *Roe vs. Wade*, this seems more like *Doe vs. Hunter*. For the sake of animals who suffer on an unthinkable scale in factory farms and whose species go extinct or face extinction at a blinding speed, we need to make abortions as widely available and accessible as possible *right now*. Vote: FOR.

9. LIFE. As someone who cares deeply about the welfare of our shared ecosystems and habitats, abortions seem more desirable than undesirable. Ecologically speaking, each new U.S. citizen presents an unsustainable burden on limited resources because, on average, a U.S. citizen contributes disproportionately to global pollution, CO2 emissions, and resource depletion. Each new *unwanted* child presents a higher chance of that person *feeling* unwanted and unloved and subsequently forced to deal with so much psychological burden that, even after years of therapy, they may not have the emotional space to reduce their consumption more than the US average (much less the global average) or ecosystems from industry. From Mother Earth's perspective, abortions in a high-consumption culture such as the United States seem not only permissible but a virtue. More U.S. abortions please! Vote: FOR.

The concision and simplicity of this presentation glosses over plenty of facts, nuances, histories, legalities, intersectionalities, and so on that add even more complexity to the question than nine oversimplified perspectives. It also glosses over a lifetime of thinking about this issue that has changed (and continues to change) as, like the court, its members and subsequent perspectives change. I have never encouraged or discouraged a woman from getting an abortion or seeing her pregnancy through to the birth of a child. Instead, I have tried as well as I could to support each woman struggling with the implications of pregnancy/abortion in her own decision, however she ultimately chose. My internally divided and shifting court, however, has not led me to struggle for any particular policy in this issue as I have not seen either side reflect my own internal concerns. More importantly, as significant as this issue seems—especially to women—issues of ecology have seemed even more critical because whatever children we bring into this world, we have to first ensure we have a world worth bringing them into.

I don't expect this brief overview of my personal views to change anyone's mind or even help further debate on the matter but, at its best, it might help reflect some of the question's complexity, disturb the dominant binary, and contribute to a more nuanced means by which each of us can sort through our own thoughts and feelings on the matter.

The bottom line: all women deserve support in their decisions as they struggle through extremely difficult choices men never have to make. We guys can, in turn, step up to the plate by listening, offering material or emotional support, just showing up, or, in this case, fighting for a women's ability to make her own choices and then, after she does, live with those choices. Options abound. The same goes for Life.